



Testimony on Read By Grade Three Law

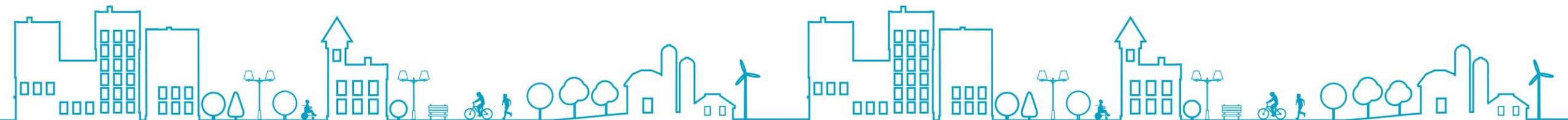
Michael F. Rice, Ph.D., State Superintendent

Tuesday, January 31, 2023



Literacy Supports in the RBG3 Law

We are strongly supportive of the reading supports currently included in the Read by Grade Three law for students struggling with reading: (1) staffing, (2) reading intervention services, and (3) evidence-based curricula and instructional materials.



Literacy Supports in the RBG3 Law

Recommended Staffing

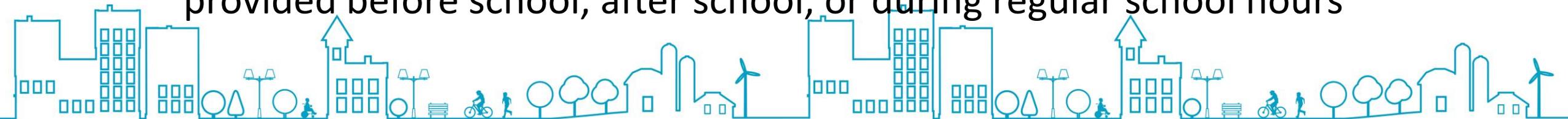
- A highly effective teacher of reading
- The highest evaluated 3rd grade reading teacher
- A reading specialist and/or
- A literacy coach



Literacy Supports in the RBG3 Law (cont.)

Reading intervention services

- Individual Reading Improvement Plans (I-RIPs)
- Daily targeted small group or 1-to-1 reading intervention that is based on pupil needs
- Administration of ongoing progress monitoring assessments
- Providing parents, legal guardians, or other providers of care for the pupil with a "Read at Home" plan, including parent, guardian, or care provider training workshops and regular home reading
- Supplemental evidence-based reading intervention delivered by a teacher or tutor with specialized reading training that is provided before school, after school, or during regular school hours



Literacy Supports in the RBG3 Law (cont.)

Evidence-based curricula and instructional materials

- High quality reading programs
- Evidence-based instructional practices



Other Important Literacy Supports

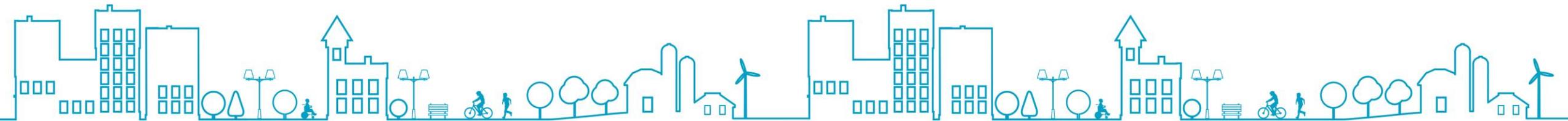
In addition to the supports in the RBG3 law, there are other important efforts that we need to adopt or expand in the state to improve literacy for all children.



Other Important Literacy Supports

Continued investments in Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP)

- Michigan GSRP program is tied for first nationally in quality for 4th year in a row.
- Expectation that the next national ratings will indicate a rise in both funding and access rankings for the state.
- Michigan's GSRP received an increase of \$168 million in FY22 and regained enrollment to near pre-pandemic levels.
- FY23 budget includes an increase of \$34 million.
- An additional 24,000 slots available due to funding increases.



Other Important Literacy Supports

Supporting the governor's call for all 4-year-old children to have access to at least a year of high-quality preschool is a tremendous way not only to get a great start for children in school, but also to improve educational and life outcomes.

The research is clear on this point.



Other Important Literacy Supports

Low early elementary class sizes in high-poverty, lower-achieving schools.

More instructional time for students.



Other Important Literacy Supports

Regular tutoring of children in need by trained tutors through the governor's ***MI Kids Back on Track*** initiative to provide 1-on-1 tutoring to those children who are struggling academically, and personalized learning support to get them back on track for long-term success.



LETRS Training

Expansion of the legislature's investment in LETRS training in the state

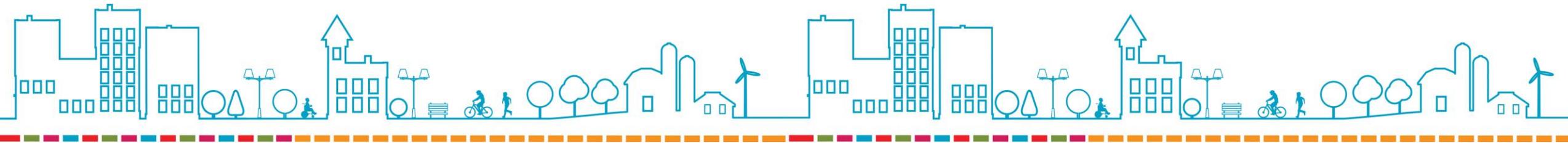
- **\$4 million** in Fiscal Year 2021-22 (Sec. 35a) to train more than 3,000 pre-K to grade 3 Michigan educators.
- **\$10 million** in Fiscal Year 2022-23 (Sec. 35a) to train more than 8,000 registered Pre-K to grade 6 educators and pre-K-12 certified special education personnel with endorsements in learning disabilities, emotional impairments, or speech and language impairments.



LETRS Training

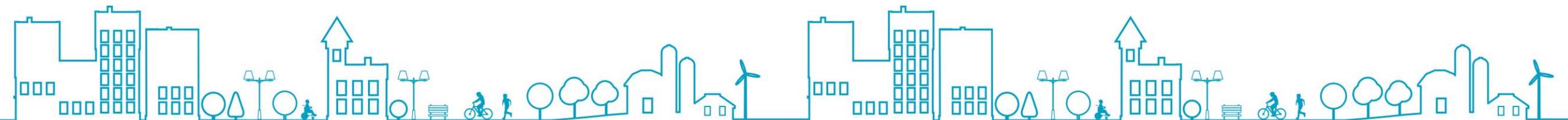
Continued investments will give Michigan the ability to train most of our elementary and many of our special education teachers in this important two-year training in the science of literacy to all of our elementary school teachers, and many of our special education teachers, to bring us close to 30,000 educators receiving LETRS training.

(*LETRS—Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling)



Dyslexia Guidance

- Like you, we believe in the importance of helping children with dyslexia become proficient and successful readers.
- MDE has developed dyslexia guidance to provide literacy supports for children in need by helping educators identify dyslexia and inform instruction and intervention methods for learners with dyslexic characteristics.
- The legislature has appropriated \$1 million in both FY 22 and FY 23 for dyslexia training for educators (Sec. 35d)



After-School and Summer Programs

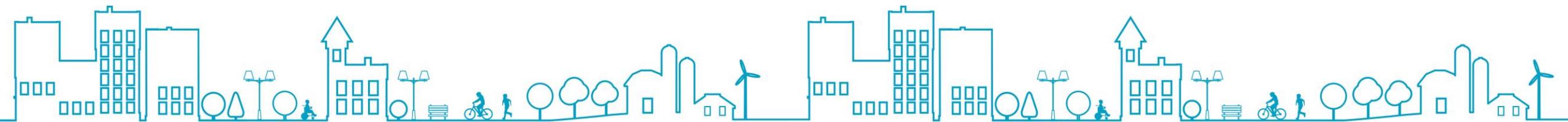
Expansion of other opportunities to improve reading, including after-school and summer programs

- The legislature appropriated \$25 million (Sec. 32n) to provide before-school, after-school, before-and-after-school or during the summer in-person programming to serve children in any of grades K-12.
- We would like to see that doubled this next year based on the level of requests we've received and the need across the state.



Getting Kids Interested in Reading

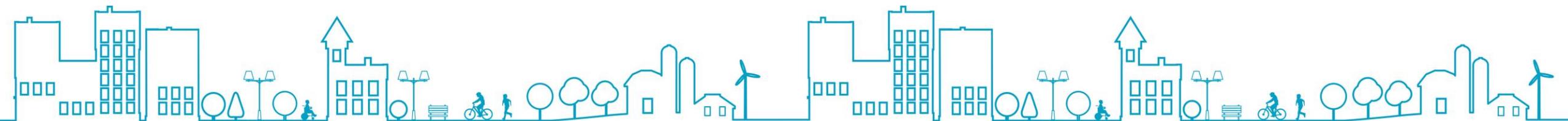
- **Diversity in literacy/diverse classroom libraries** are critical to increase children's interest and engagement in reading.
- MDE has hosted four diversity in literacy webinars, each attended by over 1,000 Michigan educators.
- Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors—children seeing themselves and others in their literature.
- We improve literacy when children are interested in what they read.



Getting Kids Interested in Reading

Comprehensive history instruction, again to increase children's interest and engagement in reading about our history.

- In 2022, we began with webinars on the Holocaust, Indigenous Peoples, and Asian American history.
- In 2023, we have planned the following webinars for social studies educators:
 - Civil War Amendments
 - Civil Rights Movement
 - Equal Rights Movement
 - Disability Rights Movement



Focus on Time Spent Improving Reading

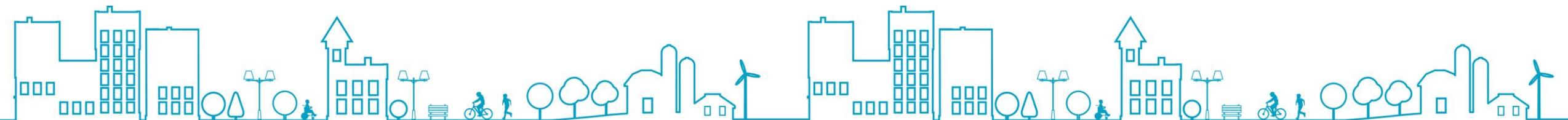
While we agree with the student reading supports in the RBG3 law and other efforts to improve literacy, we are **opposed** to the retention requirements in the law.

The Read By Grade Three law spends too much time on justifying why a student should be retained, at the expense of time spent improving the student's reading ability.



Retention Not As The Default

That said, to remove the requirement for retention in the law does not mean that children can't be retained. It simply means that the default is no longer retention of third grade students, prior to a consideration of good cause exemptions.



Supporting Our Children

We support the passage of Senate Bill 12 to repeal the required retention of third graders who are struggling readers.

Let's **eliminate the punitive** and start building on what we all can do together to **support our children**.



Thank You!

